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**Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms**

# Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/166, which requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, at its seventy-second session, a report on the implementation of the resolution, including on activities undertaken by Member States, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, relevant United Nations entities and other stakeholders to enhance the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and to ensure the realization of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

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# I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/166 on the effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, requesting the Secretary-General to report on activities undertaken by Member States, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, relevant United Nations entities and other stakeholders to enhance the implementation of the Declaration and to ensure the realization of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

2. The report highlights general developments at the United Nations and subsequently focuses on selected areas for action, noting human rights challenges and the measures taken by Member States, national human rights institutions and various United Nations actors to address concerns at both the global and national levels. It is based on the findings and reports of various United Nations bodies and mechanisms and on the written replies received from Member States and other stakeholders to a note verbale sent by OHCHR on behalf of the Secretary-General.

3. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. Adopted by the General Assembly by consensus in 1992, the Declaration stresses that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities contribute to the political and social stability of States in which they live. It offers States and other stakeholders guidance on measures to be undertaken to guarantee minority rights with a view to realizing the principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations and international and regional human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its article 27.

4. Despite the global consensus on the principles of the Declaration, persons belonging to minorities continue to be targets of human rights violations in a range of contexts. Continuous violence against religious minorities, discrimination against Roma, biased law enforcement against people of African descent and many other concerns raised by human rights bodies and others demonstrate how imperative it is to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration with enhanced implementation of all its articles. This requires concerted efforts by authorities at all levels, non-governmental organizations and minority representatives.

# II. Key United Nations developments

5. According to article 9 of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system shall contribute to the full realization of the rights and principles set forth in the Declaration. This task affects all three pillars of the United Nations, human rights, development and peace and security, and requires system-wide, coordinated engagement. Such work is facilitated by the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, coordinated by OHCHR, which aims to engage the entire United Nations system. The Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and its related action plan for 2014-2017 provide the framework, which includes coordinated engagement at both the global and country levels, including action by United Nations country teams and other actors. OHCHR has organized a number of workshops for United Nations country teams to facilitate follow-up to the guidance note. The importance of the rights of persons belonging to

national minorities is also reflected in the United Nations Development Group Guidance Note on Human Rights for Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams, issued in 2016 to facilitate the integration of human rights into United Nations work at the country level.

6. The United Nations Forum on Minority Issues and the Special Rapporteur on minority issues have continued to be key catalysts for improving the implementation of the Declaration. It is equally important that the rights of persons belonging to minorities are incorporated into the work of human rights bodies and mechanisms with a more general mandate. In this respect, it is encouraging to see frequent references to minorities in country-specific conclusions and general comments by various human rights treaty bodies as well as in the reports of many special rapporteurs. Furthermore, in connection with the Human Rights Council's universal periodic review, Member States have frequently raised issues concerning rights of persons belonging to minorities. There was a sharp increase in relevant recommendations made by Member States in the second cycle of the universal periodic review compared with the first cycle of reviews. While this rise reflects persistent challenges in the implementation of rights, it also suggests that Member States are paying increased attention to the human rights of persons belonging to minorities.

7. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals present new opportunities for advancing rights of persons belonging to minorities that need to be seized by the United Nations, States, minorities and other actors. The engagement of minorities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is crucial, bearing in mind its commitment to human rights and to leaving no one behind and the highly relevant language in the Goals and targets, including on reducing inequality. The relevance of minority issues in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was reflected in some of the first voluntary national reviews on the Sustainable Development Goals, submitted by countries to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July 2016.

8. The International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), proclaimed by the General Assembly and coordinated by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, is another important new entry point for engagement. Its theme, "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development", is reflected in an action plan. Wide engagement in the Decade is sought at the national and regional levels as well as within the United Nations, including through the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities. The Decade is promoted by the United Nations through a continually updated multilingual website, social media, posters, exhibits and special events in collaboration with Member States, students, artists and non-governmental organizations around the world.

9. Several human rights mechanisms have continued to raise issues concerning the protection of the rights of people of African descent; the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, for example, made related recommendations following her visit to Brazil in September 2015. A number of States and national human rights institutions reported in their submissions on specific measures taken with regard to people of African descent, including Honduras, Colombia and Mexico.

# III. Selected key areas of actions

## A. Empowerment and participation

10. In order for the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities to have an impact, it is crucial that

rights holders know how to claim their rights and have the skills and capacity to use the relevant procedures and mechanisms. This is the ultimate aim of the annual Minorities Fellowship Programme of OHCHR, which, in 2016, trained 11 fellows from different regions. For more than 10 years, the programme has provided persons belonging to minorities with in-depth knowledge of the United Nations human rights machinery and strengthened their advocacy skills to better use international human rights standards and mechanisms. An evaluation of the fellowship confirmed its impact, indicating that, following their training, many fellows had organized a range of capacity-building workshops on minority rights and enhanced their engagement with treaty bodies and special procedures, including through follow-up on their findings. A former fellow from Colombia, for example, organized training for over 300 minority youth leaders on United Nations instruments and mechanisms specific to minorities. OHCHR also organized various capacity-building training sessions on minority rights at the national level, including in Myanmar, the Philippines and the Republic of Moldova, and instituted distinct fellowships for people of African descent and indigenous peoples.

11. Article 2, paragraph 2, of the Declaration states that persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life. There are various ways in which such participation can be facilitated, including through consultative bodies and dedicated focal points in relevant government entities. In order to encourage such initiatives, the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia conducted a study in 2015 on good practices to improve minority participation in political life, particularly civil service, consultative and elected bodies, and is supporting the authorities in Kyrgyzstan with a view to building on those examples of good practice. Minority women often face particular obstacles in decision-making processes and other contexts. With this in mind, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) has worked to empower minority women, including by developing advocacy and media relations capacity among minorities in Kazakhstan and facilitating the participation of excluded women in human rights consultations in Nepal.

12. Several Member States also reported on their efforts to enhance the inclusion of minorities in decision-making. Germany highlighted the role of its Secretariat for Minorities, which represents the interests of national minorities vis-à-vis the Federal Government and legislative bodies. Serbia reported on the role of its National Council for National Minorities, comprising competent State authorities and presidents of all councils of national minorities within the country, in the implementation of Serbia's 2016 action plan for exercising the rights of national minorities.

## B. Data collection

13. The role of disaggregated data in the implementation and monitoring of rights of persons belonging to minorities has been repeatedly stressed by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, human rights treaty bodies and other human rights actors. In the same vein, in November 2016, the Forum on Minority Issues recommended at its ninth session, which focused on minorities in situations of humanitarian crises, that relevant data should be collected and responsibly managed according to international standards and disaggregated, where possible, by ethnicity, language, nationality status, religious affiliation, age and gender.

14. The importance of data collection is also evident in connection with the Sustainable Development Goals, not least in ensuring that the implementation of the commitment to leave no one behind is pursued and tracked. According to the agreed

global framework, the Goals' indicators should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

15. United Nations field presences have advocated for the collection of disaggregated data in a number of country contexts. For example, the OHCHR Regional Office for South America has pursued initiatives emphasizing the need to collect disaggregated data to understand how discrimination is felt by different groups and thus to design targeted policies. UN-Women has also encouraged the collection and use of such data, including by reviewing the availability of sex-disaggregated data in order to point out data gaps with respect to ethnic minority women and girls in Viet Nam. In Kenya, OHCHR kick-started the cooperation between the National Commission on Human Rights and the Bureau of Statistics that was instrumental to an agreement on a list of the population groups that should not be left behind, which would inform national efforts to implement and measure progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

16. Several States reported on their efforts in the area of data collection. Slovakia, for example, referred to its national action plan for its population and housing census in 2021, with an emphasis on Roma and marginalized groups. Argentina reported that, in 2016, the National Institute against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination started to update the national mapping study on discrimination in the country, aimed at providing statistical data on the situation of persons who are victims of discrimination. The National Human Rights Commission of Mexico had prepared a study on the situation of people of African descent, so as to raise awareness and to build analytical benchmarks.

## C. Constitutional guarantees

17. It is crucial that persons belonging to minorities are included in the process of drafting legislation and that their rights are reflected in the resulting normative frameworks, starting with national constitutions. In order to encourage such processes, the United Nations has taken various initiatives in different regions. For example, the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region has organized regional expert consultations on integrating minority rights in constitutional reform processes. The most recent consultation took place in July 2016 in Amman, where experts examined constitutional reforms in the region and explored how the rights of persons belonging to minorities could be protected more effectively.

18. In this respect, a number of States also reported on measures that they have employed to strengthen pertinent norms. Armenia, for example, reported that its constitutional amendments introduced in December 2015 had provided a more comprehensive protection of human rights generally and allowed for the introduction of national minority seats in the National Assembly. The importance of constitutional reform processes for minorities has also been stressed in Sri Lanka, including by the High Commissioner for Human Rights who, at the conclusion of his visit in February 2016, expressed his hope that minorities and other groups who had been neglected or discriminated against could now receive the attention that they deserved, not least in the constitutional reform process. The Special Rapporteur on minority issues also underlined the importance of the constitutional reform process following her visit to the country in October 2016. She urged Sri Lanka to introduce a strong minority rights regime in the governance structure as well as legal and institutional guarantees for equality and non-discrimination.

## D. Non-discrimination guarantees

19. While the rights of persons belonging to minorities stipulated in the Declaration and other international human rights instruments extend beyond non-discrimination, they are grounded in strong anti-discrimination guarantees. The need to address intersecting forms of discrimination has been repeatedly stressed by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, the Committee urged States parties to ensure that disadvantaged and marginalized groups of rural women, including those belonging to afro-descendent, ethnic and religious minorities, are protected from intersecting forms of discrimination and have access to education, employment, water and sanitation and health care.

20. Several Member States are in the process of introducing or reinforcing anti-discrimination legislation, often reflecting recommendations made by human rights mechanisms. For example, in Tunisia, OHCHR has supported the preparation of a law on racial discrimination, in line with a recommendation made by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines reported that the House of Representatives is deliberating eight draft laws that aim to address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, sex or gender or sexual orientation and political belief. Georgia reported on efforts to implement its Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination together with the national human rights strategy and related action plan. The Equal Opportunities Commission of Hong Kong, China, tasked with implementing the Race Discrimination Ordinance through complaint handling, legal assistance, policy advocacy and public education, reported on the work of its dedicated ethnic minorities unit in areas including education, health and housing and on the use of minority languages.

21. While there has been normative progress in many countries, the findings of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and other human rights bodies demonstrate that persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities continue to be frequent targets of discrimination. A case in point is the persistent discrimination against Roma. Despite various strategies and other efforts aimed at advancing the protection of their rights, Roma continue to face discrimination in law enforcement, health, education and other fields. Human rights challenges faced by Roma are common also in the area of housing, as has been highlighted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other bodies. In June 2016, the OHCHR Regional Office for Europe together with regional actors issued a statement highlighting the devastating implications of forced evictions on the life situation of Roma and called on national, regional and local authorities to find sustainable solutions to the housing or accommodation problems faced by many Roma and Travellers in Europe. In Serbia, OHCHR pursued dialogue with the authorities to ensure that human rights are reflected in a new law on housing, adopted in December 2016, including actionable legal provisions to improve the possibility of challenging the resettlement of Roma when extensive social inclusion measures are not provided.

22. Several Member States reported on actions taken to improve the situation of Roma, including through Roma strategies and action plans. Switzerland, for example, reported on the preparation of an action plan for Yenish, Sinti and Roma. Lithuania shared the results of a survey conducted to analyse changes in the situation of the Roma, revealing, inter alia, a welcome increase in the participation of Roma in basic education but a drop in their participation in secondary and higher education. The National Consultative Commission on Human Rights of France reported challenges regarding the inclusion of Roma in education, but also noted

that organizations working to defend the human rights of Roma, together with certain local integration initiatives, had helped to decrease negative attitudes towards Roma in recent years.

23. The Special Rapporteur on minority issues and other human rights mechanisms have drawn attention not only to serious human rights violations faced by Roma in Europe, but also to the discrimination they face in other regions. Colombia reported on the measures it has taken to improve the inclusion of Roma and Argentina shared data on public attitudes towards Roma and other minorities.

24. The Special Rapporteur on minority issues focused on the issue of discrimination based on caste and analogous systems of inherited status in her report presented to the Human Rights Council in March 2016, noting that while many caste-affected groups may belong to the same larger ethnic, religious or linguistic community, they often share minority-like characteristics. Under the framework of the Network on racial discrimination and minorities, OHCHR coordinated the preparation of a guidance tool on descent-based discrimination, highlighting good practices notably at the country level. The tool, aimed at United Nations country teams in particular, was launched in Nepal in March 2017.

## E. Interfaith dialogue

25. In order to address intolerance and hostility towards religious minorities and others, enhanced human rights-based dialogue between different communities is essential. Religious leaders have been encouraged to provide a platform for intra- and interfaith dialogue and discussions in order to promote tolerance and understanding between communities, including in the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, submitted to the General Assembly in January 2016.

26. The role of religious leaders and faith-based actors in promoting human rights, including rights of persons belonging to minorities, is highlighted in the "Faith for Rights" initiative, launched by OHCHR with an expert workshop in Beirut in March 2017. This initiative provides space for cross-disciplinary reflection on the deep and mutually enriching connections between religions and human rights. The initiative has led to the adoption of the Beirut Declaration[1] and its corresponding 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights", which include the pledge to stand up for the rights of all persons belonging to minorities and to defend their freedom of religion or belief as well as their right to participate equally and effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life, as recognized by international human rights law. The Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide has also organized regional and national meetings with religious leaders on their role in preventing and countering incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes and has also engaged in the production and implementation of the global Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes.

27. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, in his report presented to the Human Rights Council in March 2017, drew attention to the role that national human rights institutions can play in guiding interfaith dialogue in line with the Rabat Plan of Action. Submissions from national human rights institutions also demonstrate their role in tracking and reporting on problems in terms of communication about minority religions. The Danish Institute for Human Rights, for example, reported on its study, published in February 2017, on hate speech in

[1] www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx.

the online public debate, noting that two areas that often draw hateful comments are religion and ethnicity.

28. In their submissions, States have provided a range of examples of interfaith dialogue and their interaction with religious leaders. Senegal reported that, although there is no administrative structure or institution devoted to interfaith dialogue, private actors, including the Commission for Muslim-Christian Dialogue, undertake initiatives to foster religious harmony. Serbia reported that it has improved the process of international and regional interconfessional cooperation, and Azerbaijan referred to the existence of organizations bringing together different confessions. Italy reported that it pays particular attention to the issue of integration and anti-discrimination through a dialogue with Muslim communities.

## F. Safety and security

29. Article 1 of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities provides that States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories. Various United Nations reports show how this fundamental guarantee is being eroded in a number of contexts, with minorities being targeted and subjected to killings, violence and forced displacement. Minority women are often disproportionately affected. The report of the mapping project documenting serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Central African Republic between January 2003 and December 2015[2] highlights the religious and ethnic dimensions of many of the crimes committed in the Central African Republic. The recommendations of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, held in 2015, included the adoption of measures for increased inclusion of minorities, especially the Muslim community, in decision-making spheres.

30. In August 2016, the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and OHCHR issued a report entitled "A call for accountability and protection: Yezidi survivors of atrocities committed by ISIL", which supported the conclusion that those crimes had been committed in a systematic and widespread manner, targeting and seeking to destroy the Yazidi group, in whole or in part.

31. The Special Rapporteur on minority issues, in her statement upon concluding her official visit to Iraq in March 2016, noted that ethnic and religious minorities continue to be disproportionately affected by violence and atrocities committed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

32. In June 2016, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic issued a report on the crimes committed by ISIL against the Yazidis. The Commission concluded that ISIL had committed and continued to commit the crime of genocide against the Yazidis, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

33. In June 2017, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in an oral update to the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, said that the humanitarian and human rights situation had deteriorated dramatically and various actors were fuelling ethnic hatred, resulting in extremely grave, widespread and apparently planned attacks

[2] www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CF/Mapping2003-2015/2017CAR_Mapping_Report_EN.pdf.

against the civilian population in the Kasai area. Some 1.3 million internally displaced persons had fled.

34. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has reported on attacks and abductions by anti-government elements against persons of Hazara background. The Mission has continued to facilitate dialogue between Hazara leaders and the Government on these issues.

35. With regard to Myanmar, the protection of minorities has been addressed in reports by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar and by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, including in his report to the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar of June 2016 and the report of the OHCHR mission to Bangladesh entitled "Interviews with Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar since 9 October 2016", issued in February 2017. In March 2017, the Human Rights Council decided to dispatch an independent international fact-finding mission to establish the facts and circumstances of the alleged human rights violations in Myanmar, in particular in Rakhine State. The Human Rights Council also called upon the Government of Myanmar to continue efforts to eliminate statelessness and the systematic and institutionalized discrimination against members of ethnic and religious minorities, including the root causes of discrimination, in particular relating to the Rohingya minority.

36. The ninth session of the Forum on Minority Issues, held in November 2016, focused on minorities in situations of humanitarian crises. Forum participants examined how discrimination and different forms of marginalization increased the vulnerability of minorities in humanitarian crises, including conflict, disaster and pandemics. In its recommendations, the Forum highlighted the primary responsibility of States to protect minorities and, in particular, women, girls and persons belonging to other groups, who are often disproportionally negatively affected by disasters and conflicts and may be exposed to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

37. Building on the human rights framework, and on progress with respect to accessions to the statelessness conventions, in 2014, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees launched an ambitious 10-year campaign to end statelessness to bring more attention to the problematic situation of stateless minorities. A side event was organized during the ninth session of the Forum on Minority Issues, calling for increased efforts to end discrimination against minority groups and to ensure the protection of stateless minorities.

## G. Law enforcement

38. Various findings of treaty bodies and special rapporteurs indicate that the rights of persons belonging to minorities require enhanced attention in connection with law enforcement. The Human Rights Committee, for example, has expressed concern about the excessive use of force by law enforcement officials and recommended that State parties adopt all necessary measures to effectively reduce and eliminate the use of ethnic profiling by the police.

39. In a statement marking International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March 2017, several United Nations experts on racial discrimination called for a number of immediate measures, including anti-racism training for the police and judiciary and steps to eliminate institutional racism. The importance of human rights training for law-enforcement bodies has also been addressed by the Forum on Minority Issues, notably at its eighth session, in November 2015, on the theme of minorities in the criminal justice system. The

Forum highlighted the need for States to provide compulsory training on the protection of human rights and minority rights to officials operating in the administration of justice, including law enforcement and the judiciary.

40. The Forum also identified several specific areas of concern with regard to criminal justice systems, including lack of access to due process by minorities whether they were standing as victims, accused or offenders; law-enforcement hiring practices that excluded minorities; and mistreatment of minorities in detention facilities. The Forum called on States to address de jure and de facto discrimination that may arise from laws, policies and/or practices that are ostensibly neutral but have a discriminatory effect.

41. Country-specific recommendations concerning law enforcement have been made by, inter alia, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. Following its mission to the United States of America in January 2016, the Group recommended action to ensure accountability for police violence against African Americans and improved reporting of violations involving excessive use of force.

## H. Linguistic rights

42. The commentary to the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities stresses that language is among the most important carriers of group identity and that States are to encourage the promotion of the linguistic identity of minorities in accordance with the Declaration. Bearing in mind the various shortcomings in the implementation of linguistic rights, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues has addressed related issues as a priority. In March 2017, she issued a handbook, *Language Rights of Linguistic Minorities: A Practical Guide for Implementation*, to assist policymakers in this area. The Special Rapporteur has also examined linguistic rights during her country visits. Following her visit to the Republic of Moldova in March 2016, she made recommendations on linguistic rights in the education system and other public institutions and called for further measures to strengthen broadcasting in minority languages.

43. Several States provided information on recent measures that they had taken in respect of minority languages, with some reporting how their State language legislation accommodates the use of minority languages. Georgia stated that its law on the State language, adopted in 2016, provides for the use of minority languages in the regions densely populated by ethnic minorities, and Lithuania noted that minority languages can be used and interpretation provided in administrative and criminal justice procedures. In Kyrgyzstan, OHCHR is supporting the National Commission for the State Language to develop training materials to teach the Kyrgyz language to civil servants to prevent a decrease in the number of civil servants with a minority background as a result of a law stipulating that civil servants must be fluent in the Kyrgyz language by 2020.

# IV. Conclusions

**44. As we celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, decisive implementation of its articles remains as urgent as ever. The Declaration's messages of inclusion, equality and respect for different cultures have been challenged through hate speech, discrimination and other negative developments. Yet the minority rights message remains critical to building diverse societies that are cohesive and grounded in human rights.**

**45. We should all ensure that the principles of the Declaration and related findings of human rights mechanisms are reflected in United Nations work, from supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to enhancing efforts in the area of peace and security.**

**46. Enhanced implementation at the country level requires strong commitment by Member States to bring their legislative frameworks, policies and practices in line with the principles of the Declaration and to monitor carefully their implementation and impact on minorities.**

**47. Advancing minority rights requires partnerships that draw on the numerous examples of engagement of national human rights institutions, minority representatives, religious leaders, local authorities and others. Effective partnerships entail, inter alia, developing the capacity of minority representatives to pursue dialogue and claim their rights and ensuring that key actors, including law-enforcement bodies, know and respect the rights of persons belonging to minorities. It is only through the engagement of everyone concerned that the gap can be narrowed between the promise of the Declaration and the situation on the ground.**

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**Advancement of women: implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly**

# Improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/133, the present report covers the status of women in the United Nations system for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015. Since the previous reporting period (1 January 2012 to 31 December 2013), the representation of women in the Professional and higher categories in the United Nations system has increased from 41.6 to 42.8 per cent.

The inverse relationship between seniority and the representation of women, however, continues to persist, culminating in a low of 26.8 per cent at the highest level (ungraded). The representation of women stands highest at the entry levels, namely P-1 and P-2, and these levels also registered the largest increases of 5 and 1 percentage points, respectively, since the previous reporting period. Representation of women at the P-3 level remained at 45 per cent; at the P-4 and P-5 levels, it increased by 2 percentage points each; and at the D-1 and D-2 levels, it increased by 1 percentage point each, although the absolute number of women decreased. At the ungraded level, it remained at 27 per cent, despite a marginal increase in the number of women. Owing to frequent plateauing and regressions over the course of 2005-2015, the average annual increment for the aggregate Professional and higher categories was only 0.6 percentage points.

In order to address the slow and uneven progress made to date, the recommendations set out in the present report include the need for heads of entities to prioritize action in this regard; more rigorous implementation of existing policies by senior managers; special measures; enhanced monitoring and accountability; career and capacity development; and harmonization of gender-related policies. An enabling environment is vital to attracting, advancing and retaining qualified women in the United Nations and requires gender-sensitive policies and practices on staff selection, work-life balance and career development.

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## Abbreviations

| | |
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| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| IAEA | International Atomic Energy Agency |
| ICAO | International Civil Aviation Organization |
| ICSC | International Civil Service Commission |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IMO | International Maritime Organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| ITC | International Trade Centre |
| ITC-ILO | International Training Centre of the International Labor Organization |
| ITU | International Telecommunication Union |
| OHCHR | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| PAHO | Pan American Health Organization |
| UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNHCR | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICC | United Nations International Computing Centre |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIDO | United Nations Industrial Development Organization |
| UNITAR | United Nations Institute for Training and Research |
| UNJSPF | United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund |
| UNOPS | United Nations Office for Project Services |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East |
| UNSSC | United Nations System Staff College |
| UNU | United Nations University |
| UN-Women | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| UNWTO | World Tourism Organization |
| UPU | Universal Postal Union |
| WFP | World Food Programme |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WIPO | World Intellectual Property Organization |
| WMO | World Meteorological Organization |

# I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/133,[1] the present report on the status of women provides statistical analysis of the representation of women across the 35 entities of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015.[2] The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) provides supplemental data disaggregated by level, entity and location on women's representation, appointments, career advancements and separations. The data are contained in web annexes of the UN-Women website (see www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/women-in-the-united-nations/reports-and-monitoring).

2. The report also includes information collected through a biennial survey[3] on the gender-related policies and practices of United Nations entities, as well as their annual reports on the gender mainstreaming accountability framework, the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

3. Since its creation in 2010, UN-Women has drawn on its system-wide and inter-agency role to leverage efforts towards the equal representation of women, including through the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Yet, more than two decades after the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995, the United Nations continues to face significant challenges in attaining gender parity.

## A. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

4. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action established the goal of 50/50 gender representation in the Professional and higher categories. According to paragraph 193 (c) of the Platform for Action the United Nations was required to continue to collect and disseminate quantitative and qualitative data on women and men in decision-making and analyse their differential impact on decision-making and monitor progress towards achieving the Secretary-General's target of having women hold 50 per cent of managerial and decision-making positions by the year 2000.

5. The General Assembly then adopted resolution 50/164, in which it set the goal of 50/50 gender balance in the United Nations at all levels, in particular for managerial and decision-making positions. It is important to note that the Assembly requests for increased representation of women at the senior levels date as far back as 1970 and resolution 25/2715.

## B. System-wide gender parity strategy

6. The Secretary-General has repeatedly expressed his commitment to reaching gender parity throughout the Organization well before 2030, including in his vision

[1] In the period between the adoption of resolutions 69/151 and 70/133, the reporting cycle was changed to synchronize it with the resolution.

[2] The data as of 31 December 2015 constitute the most current for the entire United Nations system. More recent data were used when available, namely for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support and resident coordinators.

[3] In 2016, UN-Women surveyed the 35 United Nations system entities covered in the present report and received 27 responses.

statement, in which he stated that the United Nations must be at the forefront of the global movement towards gender equality. At the opening of the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2017, he stated:

> We need a cultural shift — in the world and our United Nations. Women everywhere should be recognized as equal and promoted on that basis. We need more than goals; we need action, targets and benchmarks to measure what we do. But for the United Nations, gender equality is not only a matter of staffing. It relates to everything we do.

7. In order to make that commitment a reality, the Secretary-General convened the Task Force on Gender Parity and Equality in the United Nations System, comprising almost 40 United Nations entities. The Task Force developed a road map structured around targets and accountability, special measures, field and mission settings, senior appointments and an enabling environment. The process included consultations and briefings with key stakeholders, including the Senior Management Group, United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, United Nations Staff Councils, the Human Resources Network, senior management and staff.

# II. Representation of women in the United Nations system[4]

## A. Representation by level

Table 1
**Distribution of staff by gender in the United Nations system on permanent, continuous, or fixed-term appointments, at all locations, as of 31 December 2015**

| | *Men* | *Women* | *Percentage of women* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ungraded[a] | 221 | 81 | 26.8 |
| **Subtotal** | **221** | **81** | **26.8** |
| D-2 | 380 | 169 | 30.8 |
| D-1 | 1 138 | 573 | 33.5 |
| **Subtotal** | **1 518** | **742** | **32.8** |
| P-6/P-7[b] | 139 | 56 | 28.7 |
| P-5 | 4 046 | 2 281 | 36.1 |
| P-4 | 6 070 | 4 363 | 41.8 |
| P-3 | 5 288 | 4 407 | 45.5 |
| P-2 | 1 464 | 1 984 | 57.5 |
| P-1 | 61 | 95 | 60.9 |
| **Subtotal** | **17 068** | **13 186** | **43.6** |

[4] The data set out in the report entitled "Status of women in the United Nations system", issued in December 2015 by UN-Women (available from www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/12/status-of-women-in-the-united-nations-system), used the parameter of staff on contracts of one year or more, whereas the present report provides data on staff on fixed, permanent or continuous appointments.

| | *Men* | *Women* | *Percentage of women* |
|---|---|---|---|
| NOE | 1 | 1 | 50.0 |
| NOD | 189 | 146 | 43.6 |
| NOC | 1 616 | 1 310 | 44.8 |
| NOB | 2 425 | 1 762 | 42.1 |
| NOA | 1 133 | 990 | 46.6 |
| **Subtotal** | **5 364** | **4 209** | **44.0** |
| FS7 | 27 | 0 | 0.0 |
| FS6 | 315 | 71 | 18.4 |
| FS5 | 1 097 | 466 | 29.8 |
| FS4 | 1 350 | 518 | 27.7 |
| FS3 | 39 | 18 | 31.6 |
| **Subtotal** | **2 828** | **1 073** | **27.5** |
| S-7 | 3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| S-6 | 6 | 1 | 14.3 |
| S-5 | 15 | 2 | 11.8 |
| S-4 | 20 | 3 | 13.0 |
| S-3 | 90 | 13 | 12.6 |
| S-2 | 115 | 25 | 17.9 |
| **Subtotal** | **249** | **44** | **15.0** |
| TC8 | 2 | 0 | 0.0 |
| TC7 | 10 | 0 | 0.0 |
| TC6 | 17 | 1 | 5.6 |
| TC5 | 36 | 0 | 0.0 |
| TC4 | 17 | 0 | 0.0 |
| TC3 | 5 | 0 | 0.0 |
| TC2 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Subtotal** | **91** | **1** | **1.1** |
| G7 | 1 475 | 2 141 | 59.2 |
| G6 | 4 021 | 6 436 | 61.5 |
| G5 | 4 496 | 6 828 | 60.3 |
| G4 | 5 006 | 3 621 | 42.0 |
| G3 | 4 451 | 836 | 15.8 |
| G2 | 4 053 | 208 | 4.9 |
| G1 | 129 | 44 | 25.4 |
| **Subtotal** | **23 631** | **20 114** | **46.0** |
| LT1 | 8 | 23 | 74.2 |
| **Subtotal** | **8** | **23** | **74.2** |

| | *Men* | *Women* | *Percentage of women* |
|---|---|---|---|
| PIA3 | 0 | 1 | 100.0 |
| PIA2 | 2 | 7 | 77.8 |
| **Subtotal** | **3** | **8** | **72.7** |
| **Total** | **50 981** | **39 481** | **43.6** |

*Abbreviations*: D, Director; FS, Field Service; G, General Service; LT, Language Teacher; NO, National Professional Officer; P, Professional; PIA, Public Information Assistant; S, Security; TC, Trades and Crafts.

[a] Ungraded encompasses all levels above D-2, including Assistant Secretary-General, Director-General, Deputy Director-General, Assistant Director-General, Under-Secretary-General and Secretary-General.

[b] P-6 and P-7 grades are used in PAHO, UNDP, UNOPS, and WHO. P-6 and P-7 are equivalent to D-1 and D-2, respectively.

8. As shown in table 1, as at 31 December 2015, the representation of women in the United Nations system on fixed, permanent or continuous appointments at all locations and at all levels stood at 43.6 per cent and at 42.8 per cent in the Professional and higher categories. The proportion of women's representation continues to be negatively correlated with seniority, culminating in a low of 26.8 per cent at the ungraded level — the highest level. Only the P-1 and P-2 levels have women's representation of 50 per cent or more.

9. In terms of absolute numbers, the shifts in representation needed to attain gender parity at each level are marginal in relation to the overall staff population of the United Nations system: the P-3 level would de facto require 441 women to hold posts to achieve parity; the P-4 level, 854 posts; the P-5 level, 883 posts; the D-1 level, 283 posts; and the D-2 level, 106 posts. At the ungraded level, a difference of 70 women stand between the level of representation as of 31 December 2015 and the attainment of gender parity.

10. Although women are underrepresented in non-headquarters locations, at the National Professional Officer levels they are each within 8 percentage points of parity. Given their field experience, they constitute a pool of candidates qualified for international recruitment at the Professional levels.

11. In contrast, the Field Service levels constitute the category with the lowest representation of women (27.5 per cent), owing to the concentration of Field Service positions in the technical and logistics sectors. Nevertheless, the increases in the number of women entering this area and a growing recognition by the industry of women as an untapped labour force are promising.[5]

12. Efforts to achieve gender parity have focused on women in the Professional and higher categories, often overlooking their underrepresentation at the lower service levels. Women comprise 60.6 per cent of the highest General Service levels (G5-G7) and 46 per cent of the General Service levels as a whole (G1-G7).

[5] The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport launched the Women in Logistics and Transport initiative in 2013 to promote the industry to women and encourage their career development. By June 2014, the initiative had over 1,600 members in 14 countries.

## B. Trends

Table 2

**Representation of women in the Professional and higher categories in the United Nations system from 2005 to 2015**[a]

| | P-1 | | | P-2 | | | P-3 | | | P-4 | | | P-5 | | | D-1 | | | D-2 | | | Ungraded | | | Total | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Year* | *M* | *W* | *% W* | *M* | *W* | *% W* | *M* | *W* | *% W* | *M* | *W* | *% W* | *M* | *W* | *% W* | *M* | *W* | *% W* | *M* | *W* | *% W* | *M* | *W* | *% W* | *M* | *W* | *% W* |
| 2005 | 103 | 141 | 58% | 1 349 | 1 676 | 55% | 3 331 | 2 532 | 43% | 4 596 | 2 404 | 34% | 3 686 | 1 484 | 29% | 1 266 | 430 | 25% | 405 | 123 | 23% | 172 | 47 | 21% | 14 908 | 8 837 | 37.2% |
| 2006 | 66 | 89 | 57% | 1 342 | 1 770 | 57% | 3 699 | 2 775 | 43% | 4 783 | 2 554 | 35% | 3 704 | 1 521 | 29% | 1 249 | 430 | 26% | 390 | 119 | 23% | 172 | 45 | 21% | 15 405 | 9 303 | 37.7% |
| 2007 | 71 | 81 | 53% | 1 407 | 1 742 | 55% | 3 874 | 2 881 | 43% | 4 962 | 2 774 | 36% | 3 708 | 1 575 | 30% | 1 260 | 473 | 27% | 404 | 122 | 23% | 172 | 56 | 25% | 15 858 | 9 704 | 38.0% |
| 2008 | 59 | 67 | 53% | 1 363 | 1 690 | 55% | 3 869 | 3 058 | 44% | 5 155 | 2 949 | 36% | 3 792 | 1 727 | 31% | 1 262 | 509 | 29% | 423 | 147 | 26% | 186 | 60 | 24% | 16 109 | 10 207 | 38.8% |
| 2009 | 68 | 80 | 54% | 1 473 | 1 975 | 57% | 4 347 | 3 531 | 45% | 5 528 | 3 331 | 38% | 3 979 | 1 843 | 32% | 1 319 | 534 | 29% | 427 | 155 | 27% | 180 | 65 | 27% | 17 321 | 11 514 | 39.9% |
| 2010 | 51 | 77 | 60% | 1 467 | 1 968 | 57% | 4 630 | 3 805 | 45% | 5 731 | 3 569 | 38% | 4 040 | 1 879 | 32% | 1 296 | 561 | 30% | 417 | 144 | 26% | 177 | 79 | 31% | 17 809 | 12 082 | 40.4% |
| 2011 | 48 | 75 | 61% | 1 477 | 1 965 | 57% | 4 816 | 4 027 | 46% | 5 947 | 3 805 | 39% | 4 125 | 2 004 | 33% | 1 295 | 565 | 30% | 430 | 158 | 27% | 182 | 78 | 30% | 18 320 | 12 677 | 40.9% |
| 2012 | 43 | 75 | 64% | 1 418 | 1 902 | 57% | 4 986 | 4 185 | 46% | 6 021 | 3 975 | 40% | 4 123 | 2 095 | 34% | 1 304 | 594 | 31% | 423 | 167 | 28% | 194 | 78 | 29% | 18 512 | 13 071 | 41.4% |
| 2013 | 58 | 71 | 55% | 1 417 | 1 917 | 57% | 5 208 | 4 270 | 45% | 6 029 | 4 092 | 40% | 4 114 | 2 116 | 34% | 1 268 | 606 | 32% | 405 | 174 | 30% | 194 | 72 | 27% | 18 693 | 13 318 | 41.6% |
| 2014 | 63 | 92 | 59% | 1 449 | 1 943 | 57% | 5 243 | 4 275 | 45% | 6 090 | 4 164 | 41% | 4 087 | 2 215 | 35% | 1 244 | 611 | 33% | 394 | 174 | 31% | 198 | 76 | 28% | 18 768 | 13 550 | 41.9% |
| 2015 | 61 | 95 | 61% | 1 464 | 1 984 | 58% | 5 288 | 4 407 | 45% | 6 070 | 4 363 | 42% | 4 046 | 2 281 | 36% | 1 138 | 573 | 33% | 380 | 169 | 31% | 221 | 81 | 27% | 18 668 | 13 953 | 42.8% |

[a] The data for 2005 to 2014 are drawn from the annual United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination human resources statistics reports (available from www.unsceb.org/content/un-system-human-resources-statistics-reports) and reflect staff on contracts of one year or more. The data for 2015 were provided by United Nations entities and reflect staff on permanent, continuous or fixed-term appointments.

13. According to table 2, as a result of frequent plateaus and regressions over the 2005-2015 period, the aggregate Professional and higher categories registered an average annual increment of a mere 0.6 percentage points. The highest level (ungraded) stood lower in 2015 (26.8 per cent) than in 2010 (30.9 per cent). Regressions notwithstanding, the P-4 and higher levels made the largest average annual gains of 0.6 to 0.8 percentage points each. The P-3 level, meanwhile, averaged only a 0.2 percentage point annual increase. While the P-3 level was within 7 percentage points of gender balance in 2005, it remained between 43 and 46 per cent for the whole period. Trends at the P-3 level reveal that as parity nears, progress can slow down, and efforts must be intensified to close the final gap.

## C. Representation by location

Table 3

**Representation of women in the Professional and higher categories on permanent, continuous, or fixed-term appointments as at 31 December 2015**

| | *Headquarters* | | | *Non-headquarters* | | | *Total* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Level* | *Men* | *Women* | *Percentage of women* | *Men* | *Women* | *Percentage of women* | *Men* | *Women* | *Percentage of women* |
| Ungraded | 153 | 59 | 27.8 | 68 | 22 | 24.4 | 221 | 81 | 26.8 |
| **Subtotal** | **153** | **59** | **27.8** | **68** | **22** | **24.4** | **221** | **81** | **26.8** |
| D-2 | 241 | 113 | 31.9 | 139 | 56 | 28.7 | 380 | 169 | 30.8 |
| D-1 | 581 | 301 | 34.1 | 557 | 272 | 32.8 | 1 138 | 573 | 33.5 |
| **Subtotal** | **822** | **414** | **33.5** | **696** | **328** | **32.0** | **1518** | **742** | **32.8** |
| P-5 | 2 082 | 1 242 | 37.4 | 1 964 | 1 039 | 34.6 | 4 046 | 2 281 | 36.1 |
| P-4 | 2 867 | 2 476 | 46.3 | 3 203 | 1 887 | 37.1 | 6 070 | 4 363 | 41.8 |
| P-3 | 2 221 | 2 467 | 52.6 | 3 067 | 1 940 | 38.7 | 5 288 | 4 407 | 45.5 |
| P-2 | 708 | 1 143 | 61.8 | 756 | 841 | 52.7 | 1 464 | 1 984 | 57.5 |
| P-1 | 36 | 67 | 65.0 | 25 | 28 | 52.8 | 61 | 95 | 60.9 |
| **Subtotal** | **7 801** | **7 286** | **48.3** | **8 905** | **5 676** | **38.9** | **16 706** | **12 962** | **43.7** |
| **Total** | **8 889** | **7 868** | **47.0** | **9 779** | **6 085** | **38.4** | **18 668** | **13 953** | **42.8** |

14. Disparities between headquarters and non-headquarters locations are particularly evident at the P-3 and P-4 levels (table 3), suggesting a lack of mid-career support for women, the impeding effect of mobility requirements and the likely alignment of these levels with childcare years, which require access to education and medical resources. Bottlenecks at these key levels at non-headquarters locations impede overall advancement to the senior levels, given the field experience often required for positions at the P-5 level and higher.

## D. Senior leadership in the field

### 1. Resident coordinators

Table 4
**Distribution of resident coordinators by gender and region, as of December 2014, 2015 and 2016**

| | *December 2014* | | | *December 2015* | | | *December 2016* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Region* | *Women* | *Men* | *% Women* | *Women* | *Men* | *% Women* | *Women* | *Men* | *% Women* | *Difference 2014-2016 (percentage)* |
| African States | 18 | 24 | 42.9 | 20 | 20 | 50.0 | 22 | 23 | 48.9 | 6.0 |
| Arab States | 4 | 12 | 25.0 | 6 | 10 | 37.5 | 4 | 9 | 30.8 | 5.8 |
| Asia and Pacific States | 11 | 11 | 50.0 | 10 | 13 | 43.5 | 9 | 12 | 42.9 | (7.1) |
| Eastern and Central Asia States | 5 | 12 | 29.4 | 6 | 12 | 33.3 | 7 | 10 | 41.2 | 11.8 |
| Latin American and Caribbean States | 10 | 13 | 43.5 | 9 | 12 | 42.9 | 9 | 14 | 39.1 | (4.3) |
| **Total** | **48** | **72** | **40.0** | **51** | **67** | **43.2** | **51** | **68** | **42.9** | **2.9** |

*Source*: United Nations Development Group

15. The representation of women resident coordinators increased in three out of five regions between December 2014 and December 2016 (table 4). The African region in 2015 and the Asia Pacific region in 2014 had attained 50/50; as of December 2016, however, no region had gender parity among its resident coordinators. An overall increase of 3 women resident coordinators was registered during the period, amounting to a 2.9 percentage point gain.

16. Gender and geographical diversity are often discussed as if mutually exclusive. Whenever possible, these objectives should be aligned so as to maximize resources and impact. For example, in order to improve resident coordinator diversity and address the low representation of resident coordinators from the Arab States (4 per cent), and particularly of Arab women, the United Nations Development Group team for the Arab States, Middle East and North Africa convened a thematic group on women resident coordinators and country team leadership, with a view to increasing female leadership in the region and with particular attention to staff from the Arab States.

17. In July 2016, the United Nations Development Group Leadership Working Group established an inter-agency task team on diversity in order to promote diversity among resident coordinators and to identify and cultivate a diverse corps of qualified candidates for country level leadership roles. One obstacle identified was the paucity of women with the requisite field experience at the P-5 and D-1 levels, a situation exacerbated by some organizations opening Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre nominations only to staff at the D-1 level.

### 2. Senior leadership in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support

18. As at 31 December 2016, 2 of 13 (14.4 per cent) deputy special representatives of the Secretary-General and 4 of 9 (44.4 per cent) special representatives of the Secretary-General were women. Between 31 December 2014 and 31 December

2016, the number of women special representatives decreased by two, but increased by two at deputy special representative level. Therefore, no net gains in the number of women in senior leadership were made during the period and a decrease in the level of seniority was registered.

19. In February 2017, the United Nations Secretariat issued a global call to Member States to nominate women candidates for special representative and deputy special representative positions. Efforts to encourage such nominations included a social media campaign featuring women in senior leadership positions and targeted outreach to Governments and regional organizations. Nominations were received from 126 nationalities and women comprised 41 per cent of those nominations. An interdepartmental and inter-agency panel has been proposed to screen and review nominations.

## E. Representation by entity

Table 5

**Level of representation of women in the Professional and higher categories on permanent, continuous or fixed-term appointments, by entity, as at 31 December 2015**[6]

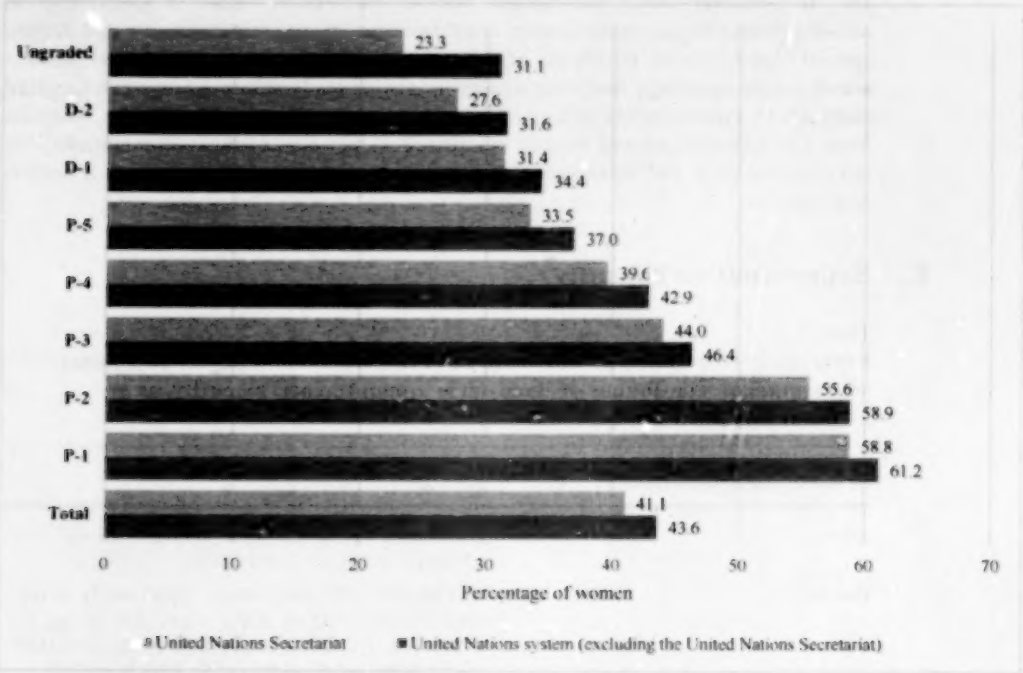
| *Percentage of women in the Professional and higher categories* | *Number of entities* | *Entities (percentage of women)* |
|---|---|---|
| ≥50% | 5 | UN-Women (78.9), ICJ (56.1), UNAIDS (50.8), UNESCO (50.6), UNWTO (50.0) |
| 40-49% | 17 | UNFPA (49.6), UNICEF (49.3), PAHO (48.2), IFAD (46.8), UNJSPF (45.4), WIPO (45.4), ILO (45.0), UNDP (44.4), UNHCR (44.0), IMO (43.8), ITC-ILO (43.5), WHO (43.5), ICSC (42.9), UNRWA (42.4), WFP (41.6), United Nations Secretariat (41.1), UNSSC (40.0) |
| <40% | 13 | ITC (39.9), UNFCCC (39.2), ITU (38.1), WMO (37.8), FAO (37.4), UNITAR (35.5), UNOPS (34.8), UNIDO (32.7), UPU (31.5), ICAO (30.3), IAEA (29.0), UNU (26.4), UNICC (18.8) |

20. According to table 5, five entities have a representation of women of 50 per cent or more in the overall Professional and higher categories. The majority of entities (49 per cent), however, are within 10 percentage points of achieving gender balance (table 5). Entities with a technical focus in traditionally male-dominated fields (such as aviation, atomic energy, information and logistics) require significantly more progress. In order to address this challenge, entities including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have proactively invested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education for girls and have tailored outreach to women.

[6] See web annexes for disaggregation by location, level and entity.

Figure I

**Comparative representation of women in the United Nations system and United Nations Secretariat in the Professional and higher categories on permanent, continuous or fixed-term appointments, at all locations, as at 31 December 2015**



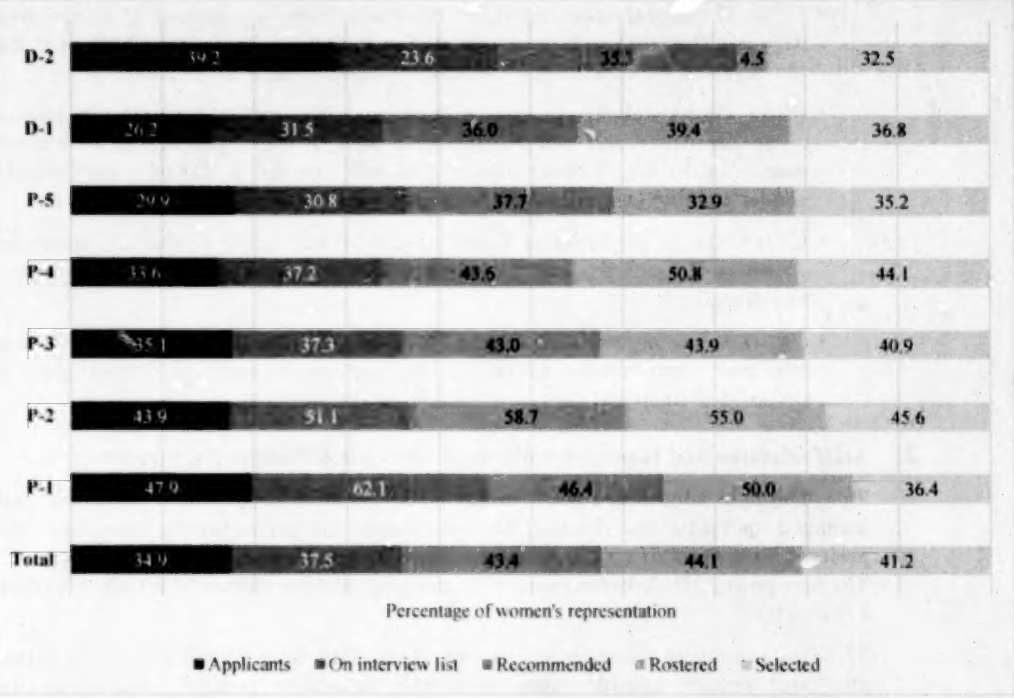

21. The United Nations Secretariat, which accounts for a third of the global United Nations workforce, significantly impacts overall system progress towards parity. As figure I shows, the representation of women in the Secretariat is lower at every level than in the rest of the United Nations system, particularly at the highest level (ungraded), which is 7.8 percentage points lower. The number of women at ungraded level in the Secretariat peaked at 34 in 2011, compared with 90 men at that time. Four years later, the number of women remained 34, while the number of men had increased to 112, resulting in a decrease in the overall proportion of women from 27 to 23 per cent. The representation of women at D-2 level stood at 28 per cent in 2015, regaining the same level it had achieved a decade before, following intermittent declines which brought women's representation to a low of 21 per cent in 2007.

## III. Career life cycle: representation of women in the Professional and higher categories in staff selection, appointments, career advancements and separations from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015

22. Progress towards gender parity depends upon increasing the external recruitment of women, advancing the careers of those already employed and enhancing their retention. This section provides a synopsis for the current reporting period. Further details appear in web annexes VII to XI.

## A. Staff selection process

Figure II
**Representation of women in the United Nations system at each stage of the staff selection process by level, from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015**[7]




23. Women perform favourably through the staff selection process: at every level except P-1 and D-2 the proportion of women interviewed, recommended and rostered is greater than the proportion of women applicants (figure II). Nevertheless, they comprise less than 50 per cent of the selections. Furthermore, studies show that women do not apply for jobs unless they assess themselves as meeting all the qualifications, while men apply when they assess themselves as meeting 60 per cent of them.[8] Job descriptions should contain only essential criteria and broad competencies, so as not to deter potential women candidates from applying.

### 1. Targeting women applicants

24. At every grade level and overall, women comprised less than half of all applicants to the United Nations system, indicating that as a whole, the system is not attracting women candidates to the same extent as it attracts men. The issue, therefore, may not be a paucity of qualified women, rather other factors that warrant deeper examination.

25. Survey results indicated that vacancy announcements in almost all entities (89 per cent) include specific encouragement for women to apply. Most (78 per

[7] Vacancy data were unavailable for: IMO, ITC-ILO, UNDP, UNFCCC, UNFPA, UNICC, UNOPS and WMO.

[8] Tara Sophie Mohr, "Why women don't apply for fobs unless they're 100% qualified", *Harvard Business Review* (25 August 2014). Available from: www.hbr.org/2014/08/why-women-dont-apply-for-jobs-unless-theyre-100-qualified.

cent) make an effort to feature women and/or have gender balance in the images on their websites and in their outreach materials. Several entities have also created materials specifically aimed at, inter alia, increasing the visibility of female staff, improving the numbers of female applicants and encouraging young women and girls to pursue relevant studies. Examples include the following:

- *IAEA*. The organization highlights its family-friendly practices on its resource page and features gender-relevant stories and videos, including "Women at the IAEA" ( see www.iaea.org/about/employment/women-at-the-iaea);
- *WMO*. On its webpage on gender equality, WMO its legislative commitments to gender parity and mainstreaming, gender policies, profiles of prominent women in the WMO community and an animation of WMO progress towards gender equality (see https://public.wmo.int/en/resources/gender-equality);
- *UNDP*. On its employment webpage, UNDP highlights gender and diversity priorities (see www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/jobs/gender-and-diversity.html);
- *UNAIDS*. The organization regularly features profiles of female staff and their role and contributions to the AIDS response through its "Spotlight on UNAIDS women".

## 2. Staff selection and managed mobility in the United Nations Secretariat

26. Through administrative instruction ST/AI/2016/1, on staff selection and managed mobility, the United Nations Secretariat promulgated increasing the periodic movement of staff and better addressing gender and geographical diversity. The new policy yielded selections of 50 per cent or more women at all levels except P-3 and D-1.[9]

27. The promising selection results notwithstanding, there remains a need to better integrate gender considerations into the selection process. According to administrative instruction ST/AI/2016/1, the members of a Job Network Board shall jointly designate a focal point for women and an alternate, both of whom shall be voting members, to ensure a gender perspective is taken into consideration in the selection and placement of staff members. In this instance, the Job Network Board focal point for women refers not to the one appointed by each department/office/mission, as referenced in the Secretary-General's bulletin on departmental focal points for women in the Secretariat (ST/SGB/2008/12), but rather to the so designated member of the Job Network Board.[10] Without appropriate training, the Job Network Board focal points for women may not be equipped to comprehensively and effectively incorporate gender considerations into the selection process.

28. Furthermore, appointing a focal point for women from among the Job Network Board rather than utilizing the existing focal points, as designated in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2008/12, effectively disempowers the standing gender architecture of the United Nations Secretariat and the key role that the focal points for women have played in advancing gender equality in their respective departments. In order to better utilize existing focal points, and to respect the provisions set out in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2008/12, departmental

[9] For detailed data of Political, Peace and Humanitarian Network selections, see web annex VIII.
[10] ST/AI/2016/1, annex 1, para. 12 (JNB); annex 2, para. 11 (Special Constraints Panel).

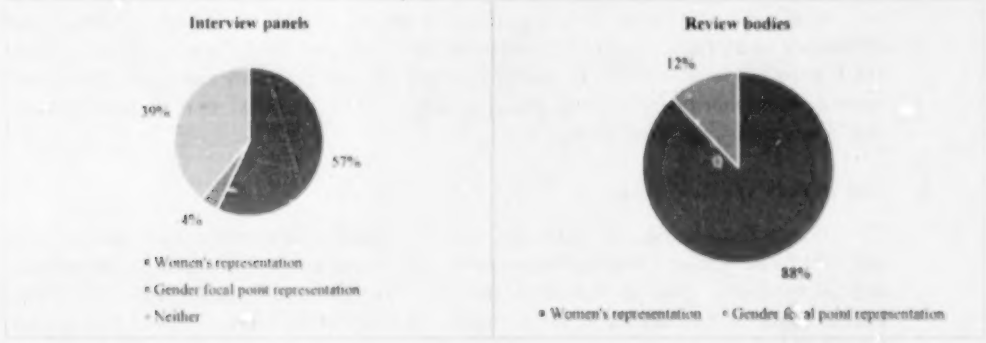
focal points for women from the relevant job network[11] could, on a rotational basis, serve as ex-officio members in both the Job Network Board and Special Constraints Panel.

29. Similarly, survey findings indicated that most entities stipulate — if they stipulate anything at all — only that women, not gender focal points,[12] be represented on interview panels and review bodies. As Figure III shows, only 4 per cent of entities require gender focal point representation on interview panels and 12 per cent require gender focal point representation in review bodies, while 57 and 88 per cent of entities mandate the representation of women in interview panels and review bodies, respectively. Nevertheless, 39 per cent of entities reported no requirement that a woman or gender focal point be included on interview panels. While diversity on panels is important, it does not ensure gender sensitivity. An understanding of gender equality is an expertise, and sensitivity to it is a function of training and/or experience.

30. Administrative Instruction ST/AI/2016/1 addresses special circumstances, including having shared custody of a child or medical constraints, at the end of the assignment process through the Special Constraints Panel. Moving this step to earlier in the process would likely mitigate stress on staff. The World Food Programme's mandatory mobility policy takes personal circumstances into account during the application phase, consultations with the medical office are provided so as to flag any health conditions of staff and/or their dependents (including spouses) that might limit their mobility and opportunities are provided for staff to appeal assignments.

Figure III

**Percentage of entities reporting women or gender focal point representation in the selection process**




[11] For example, focal points from the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations,, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and OHCHR would alternate serving as the focal point for women for Political, Peace and Humanitarian Network selections.

[12] The term "focal point for women" is used within the United Nations Secretariat and the role of the focal points is guided by the provisions set out in ST/SGB/2008/12. The term "gender focal point" is predominantly used in the rest of the United Nations system, and the functions of these focal points typically include both gender balance and gender mainstreaming, including reporting on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. For further information on gender focal points and focal points for women, see the web annex XII.

### 3. Staff planning tools

31. Impact assessments of gender parity in selection decisions require succession planning, real-time data, targets and consultations with gender focal points and focal points for women. Survey findings indicated, however, that only 67 per cent of entities utilize succession plans, including forecasts of retirements and vacancies, and 74 per cent use real-time data to inform their staffing decisions. Only 22 per cent reported setting hiring targets to accelerate progress towards gender parity.

32. To be effective, targets must be paired with accountability mechanisms. The World Health Organization (WHO), for example, requires supervisors with recruitment responsibilities to include performance on targets as part of performance evaluation. Assistant Directors-General at WHO headquarters also report through the organization's Accountability Compact.

33. The International Trade Centre requires hiring managers to meet with the gender focal point in order to integrate a gender perspective into their selections and targets. Additionally, recommendations to the Central Review Body and Executive Director include statistics on gender representation at each stage of the selection process.

34. Business intelligence tools, such as dashboards, display data dynamically to enable users to better disaggregate and analyse information. They present the best means of transparently monitoring and analysing data, including on parity. Yet, only 20 per cent of the entities surveyed reported using such tools.

35. Survey results indicate that rosters are not used effectively to fill vacancies with pre-qualified women. While rosters can potentially increase the pool of eligible women candidates, entities either do not maintain them or managers underutilize them.

36. Coherent databases of qualified women would facilitate system-wide efficiency and effectiveness. Multiple databases created by different entities across the United Nations system[13] fragment information and the candidate pool. Improved inter-agency coordination of databases could streamline efforts, maximize resources and broaden women candidate pools.

### 4. Temporary special measures

37. Given the historically slow and uneven progress towards gender parity, it is unlikely to be attained within a reasonable timeframe unless bolstered by temporary special measures. Special measures for the achievement of gender equality in the United Nations Secretariat were promulgated in 1999 in administrative instruction ST/AI/1999/9, yet such measures were never effectively integrated into subsequent staff selection systems, including in administrative instruction ST/AI/2016/1. The United Nations Administrative Tribunal (superseded by the Dispute Tribunal) repeatedly upheld the validity of gender parity and stated, in its Judgment No. 671 (1994), that "Article 8 [of the United Nations Charter] permits the adoption of reasonable affirmative action measures for the improvement of the status of women". The Office of Legal Affairs has confirmed that the provisions set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/1999/9 apply to all posts and contract types at all times, including retrenchments, reorganizations and recruitment freezes.

38. The implementation of special measures, particularly the mandatory selection of qualified women candidates where they are underrepresented, has been met with

[13] Examples include the Development Operations Coordination Office for resident coordinator positions and the Department of Field Support for Heads and Deputy Heads of Missions and senior-level appointments.

concern that the meritocratic process enshrined by Article 101 of the Charter may be compromised. These concerns are unfounded, however, given the stipulation that women candidates must "meet the requirements of the vacant post" and have "qualifications substantially equal or superior to those of competing male candidates" (see ST/AI/1999/9, paras. 1.8 (a)).

39. Temporary special measures have been recognized by several entities as a necessary tool to combat gender inequality and accelerate progress. Almost half (48 per cent) of all entities reported that they require at least one woman on the list of recommended candidates for posts at levels with an underrepresentation of women.

40. The UNDP report entitled "Gender parity strategy 2013-2017" includes temporary special measures, for example, flexibility in the time in post for positions at the P-4 and P-5 levels; women-only candidate pools for bureaux in which representation by women has fallen below 45 per cent; targeting of men for General Service positions in the interest of increased gender balance at the General Service level; and spousal support to facilitate mobility.

## B. Appointments

41. Appointments[14] had a great impact on progress; at the D-1 and D-2 levels, however, women comprised less than a third of appointments. In contrast, at the lowest levels (P-1 and P-2), and despite their overrepresentation at these levels, women were appointed in greater numbers than men (60.2 and 59.2 per cent, respectively).

42. Progress towards gender parity in appointments at non-headquarters locations continued to lag behind that of headquarters. Nevertheless, given the larger number of posts at non-headquarters locations (5,203 compared with 4,399 at headquarters), they had more opportunities to redress gender imbalances. Disconcertingly, at the ungraded level, women comprised only 20.8 per cent of all non-headquarters appointments.

43. In 25 out of 35 entities (71.4 per cent), women comprised at least 40 per cent of appointments in the Professional and higher categories during the reporting period. Since the previous reporting period, 21 of the 35 entities (60 per cent) registered gains in their appointments of women.

## C. Career advancements

44. System-wide career advancements[15] were at or near gender parity at the P-1 to P-4 levels. Women continued to be significantly underrepresented at the Director level, however, comprising just over a third of career advancements during the period. On a positive note, for all locations, women comprised at least 45 per cent of career advancements at the P-1 to ungraded levels. Yet women must comprise more than 50 per cent of appointments and career advancements if substantive progress towards gender parity is to be seen.

45. While non-headquarters locations registered a significant 8.1 percentage point increase since the previous reporting period, women still comprised only 36.8 per cent of career advancements in the Professional and higher categories

[14] "Appointments" refers to new appointments made during the reporting period.

[15] Career advancements measure upward changes in grade level since the previous reporting period, within and across United Nations entities.

(see A/69/346, figure V), and progress by level remained uneven. Career advancements of women at the P-2, P-3 and P-4 levels were at least 9 percentage points lower at non-headquarters locations than at headquarters. At the senior levels, non-headquarters locations were either on par with or had a slightly higher proportion of women (at the D-2 level) than headquarters locations.

46. Progress by entities regarding career advancements was weaker than for appointments. Women comprised 50 per cent or more of career advancements in only 12 of 35 entities (34.3 per cent). In the three entities with the largest number of career advancements (United Nations Secretariat, UNDP and UNHCR), however, women comprised at least 47 per cent of career advancements at the Professional and higher levels. For the Secretariat and UNDP, this was 8 percentage points higher than in the previous reporting period. Women comprised less than 40 per cent of career advancements in 15 out of 35 entities (42.9 per cent).

### 1. Leadership and mentoring programmes[16]

47. Eighty-nine per cent of entities reported offering leadership or managerial training, but only 41 per cent conducted training specifically for women. Sixty-seven per cent of entities offered training annually, while 33 per cent offered them only sporadically.

48. Mentors can advocate for women to develop and advance and assist them in doing so. Fifty-six per cent of entities reported offering mentoring programmes. Nevertheless, only 19 per cent targeted women.

## D. Separations

49. Attrition rates in the Professional and higher categories indicate little or no difference in the rate at which men and women separate. While there is almost no difference by level, discrepancies are greater when disaggregated by location. At non-headquarters locations, women separate at a higher rate than men at the P-1 to P-3 levels; however, at the P-5 to ungraded levels, men separate at a higher rate than women, suggesting that the barriers hindering the equal representation of women in the field primarily affect women early in their careers or mid-career, likely during key child and eldercare years.[17] By comparison, women at the P-5 to ungraded levels are, on average, between 50 and 63 years of age and less likely to separate than men at non-headquarters locations, indicating that while women are underrepresented at non-headquarters locations, particularly at the senior levels, it is not because they are leaving senior positions at a higher rate than men.

50. A United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) study of separations in 2016 among its international professional staff[18] found revealing differences in the age at which women and men separated. Women most commonly separated between 31 and 40 years of age, compared with 50 or more years of age for men.[19] Furthermore, only 10 per cent of separations of women occurred amongst women over 50 years of age. These trends reveal that women between 31 and 40 years of age face distinct challenges that impair their ability to successfully continue, and

[16] See web annex XIII for entity examples of leadership and mentoring programmes.

[17] Women staff at the P-1 to P-3 levels are, on average, between 32 and 42 years of age. See web annex IV for more detailed data by gender and level.

[18] UNOPS analysed the separation data of international individual contractor agreements and international professionals from 1 January to 31 December 2016.

[19] The UNOPS Gender Advisory Panel internal review in March 2017 showed that 45 per cent of women's separations occurred among those between 31 and 40 years of age, while 37 per cent of men's separations occurred among those of 50 or more years of age.

ultimately end, their careers at the organization. While the data are specific to UNOPS, an analysis of reasons for separation in other entities shows a similar trend across the United Nations system as a whole.

51. The three most common reasons for separation, comprising over 85 per cent of all reasons for separation during the reporting period, highlighted gender disparities:

(a) Appointment expirations accounted for a greater proportion of separations by women (44.5 per cent) than separations by men (41.4 per cent), indicating that women are more likely to hold insecure posts;

(b) Resignations accounted for a greater proportion of separations by women (25.1 per cent) than separations by men (22.8 per cent), suggesting higher levels of job dissatisfaction among women staff;

(c) Retirements manifest the greatest gender disparity, accounting for 22.1 per cent of separations by men, but only 15.6 per cent of separations by women, indicating that men are more likely than women to finish their careers at the United Nations. Furthermore, women comprised only 33.5 per cent of all retirements during the reporting period.

#### 1. Exit interviews

52. Exit interviews, required by the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, yield valuable insights for improving retention and organizational culture. Yet, they are used by only 70 per cent of surveyed entities and are mandatory in only 30 per cent. Among entities with non-mandatory exit interviews, only 15 per cent reported that they were being systematically completed.

## IV. Organizational culture

### A. Capacity development and unconscious bias

#### 1. Capacity development

53. Gender awareness and sensitivity underlie a facilitative organizational culture, making them core competencies for all staff. At a minimum, the UN-Women course entitled "I know gender", or a suitable equivalent, should be mandatory system-wide, as required by the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. More than 18,200 staff have completed the course to date, including 4,824 United Nations Secretariat staff in the first quarter of 2017 alone.[20] While the increasing uptake of the "I know gender" course is a positive development, a deeper knowledge of the issues would mainstream gender more effectively into substantive work; for that to happen, more time and greater resources need to be allocated.

#### 2. Addressing unconscious bias

54. Attaining gender parity first requires attention to be called to the bias that contributes to gender inequality. An awareness of its influence on decision-making can help to mitigate it and foster a more inclusive environment. UN-Women has hosted nine inter-agency workshops in order to encourage the United Nations system as a whole to address implicit stereotyping and unconscious bias. Those workshops have, in turn provided the catalyst for more than 30 entity-led sessions

[20] According to the UN-Women Training Centre and Office of Human Resources Management.

since 2015. Several entities, such as the Department of Safety and Security, have also added an additional component to specifically engage men and address discriminatory stereotypes of masculinity.

55. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) jointly created a video (www.un-biased.com/) to increase awareness of unconscious bias and, in particular, its impact on staff selection and career advancement.

## B. Work-life balance

### 1. Flexible working arrangements

56. In addition to the four standard flexible working arrangements (staggered working hours, compressed work schedule, scheduled breaks for external learning and telecommuting), all entities offer special leave without pay and 96 per cent offer the option to work part-time, some in the form of job-sharing. As evidence of the utility of such arrangements for women, the World Intellectual Property Organization reported that, of the 14 per cent of staff who used part-time working arrangements in 2015, 94 per cent were women.

57. Only two organizations reported providing training to managers on flexible working arrangements, although management resistance reportedly constitutes one of the greatest impediments to use and acceptance of such arrangements. Despite repeated findings linking flexible working arrangements to increases in productivity, entities reported a strong and prevalent perception among managers that presence is key to performance. Only 22 per cent of entities reported no challenges to the use and acceptance of flexible working arrangements.

58. Tracking and reporting flexible working arrangements can help to reduce stigma and increase their visibility and use. In its 2015 report on flexible working arrangements, the United Nations Secretariat reported a 30.8 per cent increase in uptake between 2014 and 2015, with staggered hours and telecommuting as the most frequently used. Uptake of these two arrangements has steadily increased since 2012, while use of the other two, compressed work schedules and scheduled breaks for external learning, has decreased since 2013. Fifty-seven per cent of women reported using flexible working arrangements, compared with 43 per cent of men. these figures indicate that flexibility, while essential to attracting and retaining women, is also important to men.

### 2. Marital status

59. Analyses by United Nations entities of marital status of staff suggest a negative correlation between seniority and the numbers of single or divorced women. A 2014 IOM study revealed that 40 per cent of senior-level women were divorced, separated or single, compared with only 16 per cent of their male counterparts. Similarly, an Office of Human Resources Management diversity study in 2013 found that, at the P-4 level and higher, between 38 and 45 per cent of women were single or divorced, compared with between 8 and 18 per cent of men at the same levels. The same study also revealed that 63 per cent of women in field operations were single or divorced, compared with 17 per cent of men. Among non-field operations, the rates were 43 per cent of women and 19 per cent of men. Marriage did not appear to affect the motivation to change duty stations — 45 per cent of married women at D-2 level applied to duty stations away from their current residence, compared with 28 per cent of single or divorced women.

### 3. Parental leave

60. Balancing a career and family is challenging for both men and women. Yet, the recruitment and career advancement of women are more likely to be negatively impacted. An IOM study in 2015 found that, where equally qualified candidates were also mothers, they were 79 per cent less likely to be hired. Additionally, in an OHCHR survey, 62 per cent of women replied that having a child would hinder their career development, compared with 40 per cent of men.

61. Every entity offers at least 16 weeks of maternity leave and 4 weeks of paternity leave (up to 8 weeks in non-family duty stations), and 85 per cent of organizations offer at least 8 weeks of adoption leave. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WHO both extended their maternity leave to 24 weeks to align their policies with their recommendation to breastfeed for six months. WHO and the agencies following its policy, are among the few that provide additional leave for multiple births (four weeks) and maternity leave for part-time staff. Additionally, WHO allows staff to return to work half-time, so two full weeks of maternity leave can be replaced by four weeks half-time. The WHO policy also allows for the sharing of leave between parents who are both staff.

62. Other entities reported approving special leave without pay in combination with maternity leave to extend it to six months. While many new parents, at the discretion of their supervisors, may utilize special leave without pay, it is triggered after the exhaustion of accumulated leave, eliminating the flexibility for returning parents to gradually transition back to full-time work or to handle care issues.

63. Adoption leave policies remain more varied and ambiguously defined. Forty-four per cent of entities reported that adoption leave falls under "special leave", distinguishing it from parental leave. Thirty-seven per cent of entities reported accommodating adoption thorough special leave without pay.

64. Currently no United Nations entity reports having a stand-alone policy for surrogacy, and the majority of entities reported applying adoption leave in such cases. Furthermore, adoption leave does not commence before a child is adopted, leaving no time for the relocation that is potentially necessary in order to finalize the adoption process; accrued leave must be used.

65. Maternity leave should be standardized irrespective of the birth origin of the child.

### 4. Breastfeeding policies

66. The standard time provided by entities for breastfeeding is two hours per day, up to one year of age. However, four entities grant less than two hours per day and three entities offer no time. Only the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) accommodated breastfeeding for two years. Five entities allow additional time for multiple breastfeeding infants. Despite the legal right in many countries to a private place to express or breastfeed at work, only a third of entities report such a provision.

### 5. On-site childcare

67. On-site childcare contributes to a family-friendly workplace and improves recruitment and staff retention. Eight entities have on-site childcare facilities. FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have some of the best, ranging in capacity (from 30 to 60 children) and coverage of care (from 3 months to 8 years of age).

### C. Codes of conduct: discrimination, harassment and abuse policies

68. A supportive and non-discriminatory organizational culture is key to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. Entities are required to implement policies on the prevention and prohibition of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment.

69. While 96 per cent of entities reported recording incidents of abuse, discrimination, harassment or assault, only 59 per cent share statistics with staff. For entities that reported making them available, they did so through annual reports from the Office of the Ombudsman, Office of Audit and Oversight, or Ethics Office, reports to Governing Bodies and/or staff circulars.

70. Most entities have mandatory online harassment, discrimination, abuse of authority and ethics training for incoming staff and several entities reported offering in-person training in these areas. When UNESCO recently relaunched its training sessions, the number of requests to the Ethics Office increased, since employees were made aware of their right to access to independent and professional advice.

## V. Conclusions and recommendations

### A. Conclusions

71. As consistently reflected in prior reports submitted to the General Assembly and as urged repeatedly by the Assembly, the uneven and limited progress towards gender parity since the convening of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 must be accelerated and parity attained in the near future. Policies abound, but effective implementation holds the key.

72. The United Nations, as the principal international standard-setting institution, bears a special responsibility to lead by example and leave no one behind. It has a pivotal role in supporting the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and in demonstrating its commitment in its own institutions to the doctrine of gender equality that it advocates. The establishment of UN-Women in 2010 demonstrates this seriousness of purpose. Fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, requires human and financial investments and intensified action to attain gender parity, both within the United Nations system and by Member States, including through efforts to increase outreach and put forward more women candidates.

73. A lack of implementation has hindered steady and meaningful advancement towards gender equality. Nevertheless, through determined efforts, it is possible to achieve sustainable and substantial progress, at all levels. The Secretary-General and the heads of the various United Nations entities, not least UN-Women, can set the goals and broad policies, but their implementation within each entity is the responsibility of senior managers, especially as many have been assigned considerable authority in personnel decisions. Efforts must include strengthening institutional capacity for gender equality at the departmental level and ensuring compliance with and reporting on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

74. The present report illustrates (paragraphs 8-24) that the overall representation of women in the Professional and higher categories in the United Nations system increased only marginally since the last reporting period, from 41.6 per cent on 31 December 2013 to 42.8 per cent as on 31 December 2015. A negative correlation

persists between the representation of women and seniority — the higher the level, the less women are represented: 60.9 per cent at P-1 and 26.8 per cent at the ungraded level.

75. Between December 2005 and December 2015, the overall representation of women in the Professional and higher categories made nominal gains and, at some levels, even registered declines and plateaus. Representation at the ungraded level declined after peaking at 31 per cent in 2010, and representation at the P-3 level plateaued between 43 and 46 per cent for the entire 2005-2015 period. These trends yielded a suboptimal annual growth rate of 0.6 per cent. At that rate, the United Nations system will not attain parity at the aggregate Professional levels and higher before 2028, and not before 2054 at the ungraded level.[21]

76. The progress of the United Nations Secretariat towards parity regrettably continues to lag behind that of the greater United Nations system. As the largest entity, accounting for a third of the United Nations workforce, progress made by the Secretariat significantly impacts that of the overall system, yet, for the 2005-2015 period, the gains were marginal.

77. Women continued to be less represented at non-headquarters locations than at headquarters, particularly at the P-3 and P-4 levels, suggesting a lack of mid-career support for women and the potential alignment of those levels with childcare years which require access to appropriate education and medical resources. The underrepresentation of women at these levels hinders advancement to more senior levels, given the mobility requirements for qualifying for posts at the P-5 level and higher. While the absolute number of women resident coordinators increased by three, the overall percentage of women's representation decreased in two regions. The number of women Special Representatives and Deputy Special Representatives to the Secretary-General increased and decreased by two, respectively, resulting in no net gains in the number of women and a loss in seniority.

78. Five entities achieved a representation of women of 50 per cent or more in the Professional and higher categories. Seventeen entities out of 35 are within 10 percentage points of gender balance at the Professional and higher levels, and 13 out of 35 have representations of women of 40 per cent or less.

79. Since the previous reporting period, 21 out of 35 entities (60 per cent) registered gains in their proportion of appointments of women. Nevertheless, women comprised less than 50 per cent of appointments at every P-3 level and higher, decreasing with each increase in seniority, and ultimately comprising only 28 per cent of ungraded appointments.

80. Career advancements at the P-1 to P-4 levels, in the United Nations system, were at or near parity for the reporting period but, at the Director levels, women continued to be significantly underrepresented, comprising just over a third of career advancements during the period. Leadership and mentoring programmes continue to be utilized across the United Nations system to better foster women's career growth.

81. While attrition rates reveal little or no difference in the rate at which men and women separate, further analysis revealed that the ages at and reasons why they separate do differ. A study found that the majority of women separated from their organization between 31 and 40 years of age, while men most commonly separated at 50 years of age or above. Women are more likely to separate due to appointment

[21] Detailed trends and projections are available from: www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/women-in-the-united-nations/current-status-of-women.

expiration or resignation than men, while men are more likely than women to retire from the United Nations.

82. The pace of progress towards gender parity in the United Nations system has not met expectations, as shown in the findings contained in this report and its predecessors over the years. The goals that were set by the Beijing Declaration more than 20 years ago and repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly are not being realized. It is therefore of utmost importance to focus attention on the continued impediments to progress and to implement the necessary corrective measures to meet the goal of gender balance.

## B. Recommendations

83. Within the framework of the preceding paragraphs, specific recommendations follow:

(a) **In accordance with relevant and applicable procedures, all senior managers should be held accountable for the implementation of the prescribed measures to attain the declared objective of gender parity, within the shortest feasible time frame, including clear setting of targets and implementation schedules. Accountability mechanisms are essential to ensuring objectives are respected and that progress is steady and predictable;**

(b) **Policies are only as effective as their implementation. The heads of all entities are requested to ensure that they coordinate with UN-Women on the development and implementation of policies and measures to progress towards gender parity. This will ensure consistency in policies and practices of the United Nations system and build upon existing good practices. UN-Women maintains a library of resources and templates to assist entities in the development of gender-related policies and products, including for gender balance strategies, exit interviews and staff surveys;**

(c) **More rigorous promulgation and implementation of existing policies is necessary, especially those which relate to temporary special measures for the advancement of women. While special measures have existed in the United Nations Secretariat since 1999 (ST/AI/1999/9), they have been largely unimplemented and not integrated into subsequent staff selection policies, such as those set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/2016/1. Temporary special measures are imperative for the achievement of parity targets and to ensure substantive equality in the treatment of men and women in the selection and mobility processes and should include:**

(i) **Mandatory selection of women when parity targets are not met and when their qualifications and experience meet the competencies of the job;**

(ii) **Obligatory inclusion of at least 50 per cent women candidates in shortlists;**

(iii) **Removal of ranking recommended candidates to allow greater latitude in selection and comparison of candidates' qualifications against job requirements, rather than each other;**

(iv) **Written justification from senior managers for the selection of male candidates for posts at levels in departments and offices where parity has not yet been attained;**

(v) **Remedial plans for rectifying the situation and bi-annual reporting until targets are met;**

(vi) **Inclusion of trained gender focal points/focal point for women in selection panels as voting members;**

(vii) **Flexibility in restrictions on career moves between levels;**

(viii) **Regular reviews of qualified women on rosters for long periods, including through coordinated inter-agency recruitment efforts;**

(d) **At every grade level and overall, women comprised less than half of applicants, indicating that the United Nations system does not attract women candidates to the same degree as it attracts men. Appealing to more women candidates should therefore be explored and efforts should be made to determine whether they are deterred by the recruitment process and/or past experiences of it; are unaware of the job openings; or find the organizational culture, flexibility and/or workplace conditions unappealing. The competitiveness of United Nations work-life balance policies should also be increased. Targeted outreach activities for recruitment would benefit from inter-agency collaboration and close cooperation with Member States, regional organizations and other partners;**

(e) **In the light of the particularly low representation of women in field and peacekeeping missions, the following actions are recommended: a review of selection processes and performance appraisals for gender bias; targets with strengthened accountability measures; improvement of working and living conditions in field operations, with a focus on, inter alia, improved standards for accommodations and security, flexible working arrangements adapted to the field and rotation policies within missions with extreme hardship locations;**

(f) **With regard to improving the gender and geographical imbalance of resident coordinators, and in alignment with recommendations of the United Nations Development Group, suggested measures include: opening Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre nominations to P-5 level staff; designating dedicated Resident Coordinator Assessment Centres for women candidates from developing countries; improving diversity of Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre selection panels; developing leadership initiatives for women leaders; supporting Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre nominees; and linking the Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre nomination process to talent management career paths, succession planning and leadership programmes;**

(g) **To improve gender balance, attention must be given to improving spousal employment support. Spousal working opportunities should be further facilitated at all locations;**

(h) **A particular priority should be the strengthening the implementation of policies and measures on work-life balance, including clearly specifying the application and tracking of such measures and training managers and staff in effective implementation and on the need to encourage trust and discourage stigma. Improving implementation of flexible work arrangements is also an important measure in the context of a facilitative work environment;**

(i) **Measures for maternity and paternity leave — including for adoptive parents — should be standardized throughout the United Nations system by heads of human resources departments. Ensuring the availability of facilities such as nurseries, day care and privacy for breastfeeding should be made a priority;**

(j) **All entities should continue to assign high priority and sufficient resources to establishing, harmonizing and implementing measures to prevent**

**and address harassment of staff and abuse of authority, including consistent and transparent reporting and tracking of incidents system-wide. It is recommended that discrimination, harassment, and abuse of authority policies take a zero-tolerance approach to prosecuting offences; integrate a gender perspective; require transparent statistics on misconduct; promulgate clear policies, procedures and resources to respond to violence against women in all areas of the work of the United Nations; ensure that complaints are reviewed within a set amount of time and that review panels have the necessary expertise, sensitivity and training to do so; incorporate anti-retaliation/whistle-blower protection; and include questions on discrimination, harassment and abuse in exit surveys;**

**(k) The role of focal points for women and gender focal points needs to be priorities and strengthened, ensuing that they have adequate levels of seniority and responsibility, clear and written terms of reference and an appropriate allocation of dedicated time and financial resources and training to carry out their essential functions in relation to both gender mainstreaming and gender parity. Focal points for women or gender focal points should be included in staff selection processes to monitor compliance with measures related to gender parity and offer advice to panel members. The designation of men as gender focal points should be encouraged;**

**(l) Global staff surveys and exit interviews assess organizational culture and its bearing on the status of women in the United Nations system and, as such, it is highly recommended that entities systematically utilize these tools to guide policy development and explore sex-disaggregated reasons behind separations. Separation/exit interviews should also be mandatory, regardless of category or level, to ensure robust data;**

**(m) Gender sensitivity and unconscious bias trainings should be provided to all staff, in particular senior management and those involved in staff selection processes;**

**(n) The indicators of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on gender architecture and parity remain a particular challenge across the United Nations system. All entities should therefore be encouraged to fully comply with the minimum standards of the updated action plan, which will be initiated in January 2018;**

**(o) To visibly demonstrate commitment to gender parity, senior management should follow the Secretary-General's example and join the International Gender Champions, making specific, firm and ambitious commitments to enhance gender equality and parity within their organizations;**

**(p) In the spirit of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, efforts should be enhanced to collect and disseminate the most up-to-date quantitative and qualitative sex-disaggregated data, in particular on decision-making, and to regularly and closely monitor progress towards achieving the goal of 50/50 gender balance;**

**(l) It is evident that efforts need to be redoubled to attain the goal of gender parity at all levels throughout the United Nations system, particularly in the field. Furthermore, attaining and sustaining parity requires allocating an appropriate level of resources — higher than the current level. Without further investment, accelerated gains may remain elusive. As declared by the Secretary-General in his 2017 International Women's Day message, "Now we must move from ambition to action".**

# Annex

## Distribution of staff by gender and entity from the P-1 to ungraded levels, on permanent/continuous/fixed-term appointments at all locations in the United Nations system, as at 31 December 2015

| | P-1 | | P-2 | | P-3 | | P-4 | | P-5 | | D-1 | | D-2 | | Ungraded | | Subtotal | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Entity* | *M* | *W* | *M* | *W* | *M* | *W* | *M* | *W* | *M* | *W* | *M* | *W* | *M* | *W* | *M* | *W* | *M* | *W* | *Women (percentage)* |
| FAO | 12 | 17 | 58 | 93 | 162 | 173 | 352 | 177 | 272 | 83 | 62 | 16 | 27 | 8 | 10 | 3 | 955 | 570 | 37.4 |
| IAEA | 2 | 6 | 57 | 65 | 215 | 108 | 348 | 129 | 247 | 51 | 29 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 908 | 371 | 29.0 |
| ICAO | 0 | 0 | 15 | 17 | 44 | 36 | 109 | 34 | 42 | 12 | 18 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 232 | 101 | 30.3 |
| ICJ | 0 | 0 | 8 | 12 | 7 | 11 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 25 | 32 | 56.1 |
| ICSC | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 9 | 42.9 |
| IFAD | 2 | 2 | 16 | 34 | 35 | 47 | 34 | 44 | 63 | 21 | 13 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 176 | 155 | 46.8 |
| ILO | 6 | 12 | 47 | 57 | 95 | 125 | 191 | 173 | 228 | 112 | 48 | 28 | 14 | 11 | 8 | 3 | 637 | 521 | 45.0 |
| IMO | 0 | 0 | 4 | 22 | 20 | 19 | 22 | 8 | 23 | 13 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 86 | 67 | 43.8 |
| ITC | 2 | 4 | 18 | 19 | 30 | 22 | 27 | 14 | 21 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 101 | 67 | 39.9 |
| ITC-ILO | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 6 | 16 | 12 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 35 | 27 | 43.5 |
| ITU | 1 | 5 | 19 | 31 | 72 | 48 | 66 | 44 | 56 | 16 | 15 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 237 | 146 | 38.1 |
| PAHO | 0 | 2 | 16 | 25 | 34 | 41 | 108 | 93 | 31 | 21 | 11 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 203 | 189 | 48.2 |
| United Nations Secretariat | 7 | 10 | 484 | 606 | 2 075 | 1 631 | 2 074 | 1 360 | 1 106 | 556 | 345 | 158 | 110 | 42 | 112 | 34 | 6 313 | 4 397 | 41.1 |
| UN-Women | 0 | 0 | 8 | 33 | 25 | 69 | 19 | 86 | 20 | 84 | 5 | 17 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 79 | 295 | 78.9 |
| UNAIDS | 0 | 0 | 6 | 13 | 20 | 31 | 52 | 64 | 76 | 68 | 30 | 16 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 194 | 200 | 50.8 |
| UNDP | 2 | 4 | 82 | 134 | 276 | 265 | 421 | 316 | 345 | 213 | 134 | 95 | 43 | 21 | 16 | 7 | 1 319 | 1 055 | 44.4 |
| UNESCO | 14 | 18 | 69 | 120 | 158 | 170 | 128 | 115 | 80 | 45 | 29 | 17 | 6 | 12 | 5 | 3 | 489 | 500 | 50.6 |
| UNFCCC | 0 | 0 | 56 | 33 | 61 | 43 | 33 | 25 | 12 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 172 | 111 | 39.2 |
| UNFPA | 0 | 0 | 20 | 35 | 65 | 71 | 109 | 91 | 97 | 95 | 33 | 33 | 12 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 337 | 331 | 49.6 |
| UNHCR | 4 | 0 | 175 | 217 | 550 | 381 | 400 | 300 | 143 | 109 | 59 | 38 | 15 | 14 | 5 | 1 | 1 351 | 1 060 | 44.0 |
| UNICC | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 52 | 14 | 19 | 5 | 12 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 95 | 22 | 18.8 |
| UNICEF | 1 | 3 | 98 | 157 | 467 | 447 | 587 | 565 | 339 | 295 | 58 | 39 | 17 | 15 | 2 | 3 | 1 569 | 1 524 | 49.3 |
| UNIDO | 1 | 0 | 9 | 8 | 37 | 33 | 45 | 20 | 52 | 16 | 23 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 171 | 83 | 32.7 |

| Entity | P-1 | | P-2 | | P-3 | | P-4 | | P-5 | | D-1 | | D-2 | | Ungraded | | Subtotal | | Women (percentage) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | |
| UNITAR | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 20 | 11 | 35.5 |
| UNJSPF | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 14 | 15 | 25 | 14 | 7 | 13 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 53 | 44 | 45.4 |
| UNOPS | 0 | 0 | 30 | 36 | 139 | 66 | 98 | 50 | 54 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 322 | 172 | 34.8 |
| UNRWA | 0 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 25 | 33 | 44 | 31 | 22 | 13 | 15 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 117 | 86 | 42.4 |
| UNSSC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 6 | 40.0 |
| UNU | 0 | 0 | 6 | 8 | 13 | 7 | 10 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 53 | 19 | 26.4 |
| UNWTO | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 22 | 22 | 50.0 |
| UPU | 0 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 23 | 12 | 14 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 63 | 29 | 31.5 |
| WFP | 0 | 0 | 83 | 79 | 303 | 204 | 180 | 143 | 163 | 110 | 63 | 38 | 31 | 13 | 5 | 2 | 828 | 589 | 41.6 |
| WHO | 4 | 6 | 36 | 65 | 155 | 170 | 402 | 321 | 388 | 237 | 57 | 19 | 31 | 8 | 11 | 7 | 1 084 | 833 | 43.5 |
| WIPO | 2 | 2 | 10 | 30 | 73 | 82 | 93 | 78 | 65 | 36 | 35 | 13 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 294 | 244 | 45.4 |
| WMO | 0 | 1 | 6 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 31 | 24 | 38 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 107 | 65 | 37.8 |
| **Total** | **61** | **95** | **1 464** | **1 984** | **5 288** | **4 407** | **6 070** | **4 363** | **4 046** | **2 281** | **1 138** | **573** | **380** | **169** | **221** | **81** | **18 668** | **13 953** | **42.8** |

*Abbreviations*: FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; IAEA, International Atomic Energy Agency; ICAO, International Civil Aviation Organization; ICJ, International Court of Justice; ICSC, International Civil Service Commission; IFAD, International Fund for Agricultural Development; ILO, International Labour Organization; IMO, International Maritime Organization; ITC, International Trade Centre; ITC-ILO, International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization; ITU, International Telecommunication Union; PAHO, Pan American Health Organization; UN-Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; UNAIDS, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; UNFCCC, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund; UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNICC, United Nations International Computing Centre; UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund; UNIDO, United Nations Industrial Development Organization; UNITAR, United Nations Institute for Training and Research; UNJSPF, United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund; UNO United Nations Office for Project Services; UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; UNSSC, United Nations System Staff College; UNU, United Nations University; UNWTO, World Tourism Organization; UPU, Universal Postal Union; WFP, World Food Programme; WHO, World Health Organization; WIPO, World Intellectual Property Organization; MO, World Meteorological Organization.

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**Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

# Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

## Note by the Secretary-General**

1. The sixty-first report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, for the calendar year 2016 (GC(61)/3), is submitted herewith to the General Assembly. Major developments since the report was published will be covered by the annual statement of the Director General of the Agency to the Assembly. The report has been transmitted in accordance with the provisions of article III, paragraph 1 (a), of the Agreement governing the relationship between the United Nations and the Agency (Assembly resolution 1145 (XII), annex).

2. As only a limited number of copies of the report are available, delegations are requested to have the copies transmitted to them available during the discussion of this item.

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* A/72/150.

** The annual reports, in all languages, are printed in Vienna in August of each year as part of the documentation for the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. A specified number of copies are sent to the United Nations as part of the documentation for the General Assembly.

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